

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What are the Kleps Awards?**

The Ralph N. Kleps Awards for Improvement in the Administration of the Courts were created in 1991 in honor of Ralph N. Kleps, the first Administrative Director of the California Courts. The purpose of the award is to celebrate creative, innovative programs developed by California courts that contribute to the improved administration of justice.

### **How often are the Kleps Awards given out?**

The Kleps Awards is a biennial program. Nominations are accepted and evaluated every two years. The next Kleps cycle will cover 2006-2007.

### **When is my Kleps nomination form due?**

The deadline for sending in completed nomination materials is Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at 5pm. It is highly preferred that nominations be submitted by e-mail. If there are extenuating circumstances that prevent e-mailing a nomination, mailing a hard copy is permissible.

### **Who selects award recipients?**

Nominations are assessed and evaluated by a committee whose members are appointed by the Chief Justice. The Kleps Awards Committee is composed of representatives from northern, southern, and central California. All segments of the court community are represented—large courts and small—including: Appellate Justices, judges with administrative responsibilities, CEO's, and court program managers.

### **What is the timeline and process for awards selection?**

After reviewing each application, committee members will make site visits during the fall of 2006 and winter of 2007, to see nominated programs in action, after which they score and evaluate each program. In April 2007, the committee will make formal recommendations to the Judicial Council, identifying those programs that they think should receive Kleps Awards. Kleps nominees will be notified after the Judicial Council approves award recommendations.

### **Do all award applicants receive a site visit?**

No—only those applications that meet each of the criteria, as outlined in the nomination materials, will receive a site visit. Early in the process, the committee will contact courts whose programs may for some reason be ineligible for consideration.

### **What is the nature of the Kleps award and when are the awards presented?**

Each awarded court receives a commemorative plaque. Awardees are also profiled in a special AOC publication and Web site covering a wide array of innovations, featured in a video shown at the awards ceremony, and are given the opportunity to disseminate information about their programs to other courts and the public. The Chief Justice traditionally presents plaques to Kleps recipients in a special ceremony held at the biennial Statewide Judicial Branch Conference. The next Kleps Awards ceremony will take place in September 2007.

### **What is meant by the award criteria “a project of a California court?”**

This means that a California court is the leader of the project. Even when working closely on a collaborative project with other community and justice partners, Kleps nominated programs must be court driven. For example, a week-long teacher civics education program organized by a local non-profit that includes one day observing court and touring the courthouse would not qualify for a Kleps nomination.

## **How do I know if our program addresses one of the goals outlined in the Judicial Council's Strategic Plan?**

You can access the current strategic plan, *Leading Justice into the Future* at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/documents/stplan2k.pdf](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/documents/stplan2k.pdf). The document lists the six goals.

### **What is meant by the award criteria "innovation?"**

"Innovative" is defined as creating value by *initiating* practices that enhance judicial efficiency and effectiveness. This means that—to the best of the knowledge of the nominee—no other substantially similar program has recently been launched by another court. In determining if a program is innovative in this sense, consider researching on the Innovations website the prior Kleps award recipient programs. In addition, information about the Superior Court in different California counties can be viewed on-line through <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/otherwebsites.htm>.

As an example, Law Day events have been conducted in many locations. A Law Day program, however, may be eligible to apply for a Kleps award if it is truly innovative and has substantially different components from other Law Day programs in California. On the other hand, the implementation of online technology may not be eligible for a Kleps award if substantially similar technology is already in place in another court.

### **What is meant by the award criteria "replicability?"**

Replicability is how other courts can learn from and reproduce a Kleps-awarded program. This takes into account several factors: the need for a program, program costs, staffing requirements, and program materials, among others. Consider to what extent other courts could mirror your program—either in total, in a scaled-back manner, or even more broadly. Consider, also, your court's capacity and willingness to share information about the program. Is there an electronic template that other courts can adjust for their needs? Are you able to easily document your program planning, evaluation, and outcomes so that other courts can reference it as a model? These are essential tools in disseminating information and supporting other courts in their efforts to replicate your program.

### **What is meant by the award criteria "sustainability?"**

Sustainability refers to the program's potential to continue to exist after the "pilot period," and should also be considered a factor of replicability. Was your program funded from a one-time grant or award? Are resources built into your court's budget and staffing model to support program continuity? Does the program have the capacity to respond to changing financial and human resource scenarios at your court?

### **What is meant by the award criteria "measurable results, outcomes, or benefits?"**

A separate tip sheet is being developed that will give tangible advice about evaluation. Check back on this website in May, 2006.

### **What are the 8 short-term strategic priorities identified by the Judicial Council in fall 2005?**

In response to the 2005 *Trust and Confidence in the California Courts: A Survey of the Public and Attorneys*, the Judicial Council identified the following short-term priorities for improving trust in the courts:

1. Improve court user satisfaction in the family, juvenile, and traffic courts.
2. Improve and enhance the courts' use of the Internet for disseminating information and conducting court business.
3. Reduce case delays and continuances.
4. Emphasize quality service to court users in all court staff and judicial officer training programs; include an emphasis on procedural fairness, observance of code and rules of court, and appropriate applications of court orders in judicial officer training.
5. Leverage jury service and other venues of contact with the public as a means of educating the public about the courts.
6. Revive community-focused court planning.
7. Increase the availability of affordable legal representation.
8. Expand services to non-English speaking court users.

For more information, please refer to the Public Trust and Confidence 2005 reference page ([www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/4\\_37pubtrust.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/4_37pubtrust.htm)).